

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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1. COMMENTS AND EDITORIALS IN ISRAELI PRESS CONTINUE TO ANALYZE PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S MOVES AND SPECULATE ON POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. FOR EXAMPLE, TWO RESPECTED COLUMNISTS DISCUSSED THE MOVES IN HAARETZ DECEMBER 21. SAMET PRAISES RABIN'S MOVE AND THE MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS CARRIED OUT. "THOSE WHO DO WHAT RABIN HAS DONE RECEIVE THE REWARD COMING TO THEM, THE PRESTIGE AND POLITICAL ADVANTAGES WHICH EARLIER SEEMED TO BE JUST OUT OF MR. RABIN'S REACH..." SAMET ALSO PRAISES RABIN FOR CARRYING OUT HIS ACTION WITHOUT "STAMMERINGS OR HESITANCY, BUT WITH A SWIFT SUCCESSION OF CONSULTATIONS, REQUEST FOR OPINION, AND PROMPT DECISION...STRICT SECRECY..." IN CONCLUSION, SAMET WRITES THAT THE PUBLIC IS ENTITLED TO ASK: "WHY HAS NOT THE PRIME MINISTER ACTED IN THIS MANNER ON OTHER INTERNAL MATTERS DURING HIS TERM OF OFFICE? WILL HE BE ABLE TO BEHAVE IN A SIMILAR WAY IN THE COMPLEX ACTIVITY CONCERNING A SETTLEMENT, AND
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ESPECIALLY ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE?..."

2. IN THE OTHER HAARETZ COMMENTARY, YOEL MARCUS ALSO DEALS WITH RABIN'S MOTIVES, ACCORDING TO MARCUS, RABIN'S MOVE IS A DELIBERATE POLITICAL EXERCISE "WITH THE INTENTION OF KILLING SEVERAL BIRDS WITH ONE STONE." THE FOLLOWING FACTORS MUST

HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO RABIN'S DECISION: THE GOVERNMENT WAS CRUMBLING, EXPERIENCING A STEADY LOSS IN AUTHORITY AND CREDIBILITY; THE ECONOMIC SITUATION WAS CAUSING ANXIETY AND IT SEEMED HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT RABIN'S PARTY WOULD HAVE TO GO TO THE ELECTIONS IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF THE BEGINNINGS OF A RECESSION; THERE WAS THE DANGER THAT THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION, UNDER ARAB PRESSURE, WOULD NOT WAIT FOR ELECTIONS IN ISRAEL BEFORE PLACING RABIN'S GOVERNMENT IN A POSITION OF HAVING TO TAKE UNPOPULAR DECISIONS; IN THE PARTY THERE WERE DISTINCT SIGNS OF MUTINY AGAINST THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP; RELATIONS WITH HISTADRUT LEADERSHIP HAD SHARPLY DETERIORATED; THE NEW LISTS (YADIN-RUBINSTEIN-SHARON) WERE GAINING MOMENTUM. ACCORDING TO MARCUS, RABIN AND EXPERIENCED MEMBERS OF HIS PARTY REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT TIME WAS NOT WORKING IN THEIR OR THE PARTY'S FAVOR.

3. LOOKING AHEAD, MARCUS CONSIDERS THE BENEFITS WHICH RABIN HOPES TO ACHIEVE FROM HIS SURPRISE MOVE. THOSE INCLUDE REDUCING PERES' PROSPECTS OF RUNNING FOR THE PREMIERSHIP, YADIN AND SHARON NOT HAVING ENOUGH TIME TO GET ORGANIZED, AND MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL: "RABIN WILL BENEFIT FROM HIS NEW IMAGE OF THE INITIATORY LEADER. COMPRESSING HIS MOVES WILL ENABLE HIM TO MAKE HIS TRIP TO THE U.S. CLOSE TO ELECTION TIME, WHICH RABIN CONSIDERS AN ASSET SO LONG AS THERE IS NO CHANGE OF HORSES EN ROUTE TO THE TOP OF THE HILL..." MARCUS CONCLUDES BY EXPRESSING GRAVE DOUBTS WHETHER RABIN'S "EXERCISE" WILL PROVE SUCCESSFUL. .

4. SEVERAL EDITORIALS ALSO DISCUSS THE NEW SITUATION. NOT SURPRISINGLY, A HATZOFI EDITORIAL SEVERELY CRITICIZES RABIN'S UNCLASSIFIED

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STEP, SAYING THAT "AT A TIME WHEN THE COUNTRY IS AT ITS LOWEST EBB--WITH STRIKES, LOCKOUTS, LOW PRODUCTIVITY, VAST CORRUPTION, LARGE SCALE EMIGRATION AND LOW IMMIGRATION--THE SOLUTION THE RABIN GOVERNMENT HAS FOUND FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF ISRAEL...IS A CHEAP TRICK WHEREBY IT EXPELLED THE NRP. SUCH AN ACT OF BRAVADO IS DESIGNED TO COVER UP FOR THE RABIN GOVERNMENT'S LACK OF LEADERSHIP AND GRAVE FAILURES IN EVERY AREA."

6. DAVAR EDITORIALIZES THAT THE INTERNAL PROBLEMS (CONNECTED WITH THE PRESENT CRISIS) SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO INTERFERE WITH THE PROPER RUNNING OF THE COUNTRY. A MAARIV EDITORIAL NOTES THAT THE RABIN GOVERNMENT IN EFFECT HAS AHEAD OF IT FIVE OR SIX MONTHS WITHOUT FEAR OF COALITION BLACKMAIL. ACCORDINGLY, IT WILL BE FREE TO CONDUCT NEGOTIATIONS OVER A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT AND, IF THINGS GO ACCORDING TO PLAN, BY ELECTION TIME MAY BE ABLE TO PRESENT THE VOTERS WITH A DRAFT AGREEMENT SUFFICIENTLY ATTRACTIVE TO ATTRACT

A WINNING NUMBER OF VOTES.

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